

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (previously presented) A point assembly for an applicator, comprising :
2 a housing having a back end and a tip end with a tip opening;
3 a tip ball positioned in said tip end of said housing and sized to close said tip
4 end opening when positioned against said tip opening;

5 a biasing element positioned to bias said tip ball toward said tip opening; and
6 a ball pusher positioned between said biasing element and said tip ball and
7 including a support element and a contact element extending from said support element and
8 having a shape adapted to conform to the shape of the tip ball ;

9 wherein
10 said support element has a front face and a rear face;
11 said contact element extends from said front face;
12 said contact element has a pushing end contacting said tip ball designed and
13 configured to conform to the shape of said tip ball;
14 said rear face faces said biasing element;
15 said support element has a cross-sectional dimension and said contact element
16 has a cross-sectional dimension smaller than said support element cross-sectional dimension;
17 and
18 said support element does not contact said biasing element in a lateral
19 direction.

1 2. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said contact element extends
2 outwardly from a center portion of said front face of said support element.

1 3. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein :
2 said housing has an inner barrel having a varied cross-sectional shape;
3 said inner barrel has at least a front portion, a middle portion, and a back
4 portion;
5 said front portion is substantially ball-shaped and includes a passageway to
6 said middle portion;

7 said middle portion is outwardly cone-shaped with a narrow section adjacent
8 said front portion and a wide section associated with said back portion;
9 said back portion is substantially cylindrical;
10 said tip ball is positioned in said front portion;
11 said biasing element and said support element are positioned in said back
12 portion; and

13 said contact element extends through said middle portion to meet said tip ball
14 positioned in said front portion.

1 4. (original) The point assembly of claim 3, wherein said support element is
2 configured and dimensioned for insignificant lateral movement within said barrel of the point
3 assembly.

1 5. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein:
2 said housing has an inner barrel in which said tip ball, said biasing element,
3 and said ball pusher are positioned;
4 said support element is substantially cylindrical and said inner barrel has a
5 cylindrical interior wall; and

6 said support element has a diameter selected to allow said support element to
7 slide within said cylindrical interior wall of said barrel without significant lateral movement.

1 6. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said contact element of said
2 ball pusher is formed integrally with said support element of said ball pusher.

1 7. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said ball pusher is formed of
2 one of metal, plastic, or glass.

1 8. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said ball pusher has a low
2 friction against said tip ball.

1 9. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said applicator is a writing
2 instrument.

1 10. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said support element
2 includes at least one cut-out portion extending therethrough between said front face and said

3 rear face of said support element for allowing a substance to flow through said cut-out
4 portions for exit through said tip opening.

1 11. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said ball pusher is formed
2 separately from said biasing element.

1 12. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said biasing element is a
2 helical spring.

1 13. (original) A ball pusher for positioning in the point assembly of an applicator,
2 said point assembly having a tip opening in which a tip ball is positioned, said tip ball being
3 biased against the tip opening by a biasing element, wherein said ball pusher comprises:

4 a support element having a front face, a rear face, and a cross-sectional
5 dimension, said rear face of said support element being configured for facing the biasing
6 element in the point assembly of the applicator; and

7 a contact element extending from said front face of said support element, said
8 contact element being configured for contacting the tip ball and having a shape adapted to
9 conform to the shape of the tip ball positioned at the tip opening and for pushing the tip ball
10 against the tip opening, said contact element having a cross-sectional dimension smaller than
11 said support element cross-sectional dimension;

12 wherein:

13 said support element does not contact said biasing element in a lateral
14 direction; and

15 said contact element has a pushing end contacting said tip ball designed and
16 configured to the shape of said tip ball.

1 14. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said support element has at
2 least one cut-out portion extending from said front face to said rear face.

1 15. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said contact element is
2 substantially cylindrical.

1 16. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said contact element is formed
2 integrally with said support element.

1 17. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said ball pusher is formed of
2 one of metal, plastic, or glass.

1 18. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said contact element extends
2 from the center of said support element.

1 19. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said contact element is
2 perpendicular to said support element.

1 20.-23. (canceled)